

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION II

DATE: SEP 13 2007

SUBJECT: Removal Site Evaluation for Reichhold Chemicals, Inc., Newark, Essex County, New Jersey  
(CERCLIS ID No. NJD048797195)

FROM: Nick Magriples, On-Scene Coordinator  
Removal Action Branch



TO: File

Introduction

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Removal Action Branch has been requested to conduct a Removal Site Evaluation (RSE) at Reichhold Chemicals, Inc., a site where no further remedial action is planned (NFRAP). The NFRAP determination signifies that no additional remedial steps will be taken to list the Site on the National Priorities List unless new information warranting further Superfund consideration or conditions not previously known to EPA regarding the Site are disclosed. As of February 2005, EPA had determined that no further remedial action was warranted by the Federal Superfund program at Reichhold Chemicals, Inc.

Site Description and Background

Reichhold Chemicals, Inc. (Site) is located at 46-58 Albert Avenue, Newark, Essex County, New Jersey. The Site, which is approximately 1.5 acres in size, is the location of a former chemical manufacturing facility. It is bound to the north by Lister Avenue; to the east by Cornelia Street, to the south by Albert Street; and to west by railroad tracks. Commercial and industrial facilities surround the Site on each of these streets. Several Superfund sites and waste management facilities are situated in the same neighborhood. The Site is currently used as a parking lot for tractor trailers, flatbeds, and rigging equipment. The same company apparently also uses the property across Albert Street, formerly the location of Cellofilm Corporation.

Chemical manufacturing operations commenced at the Site in the 1930s. Reichhold Chemicals acquired the existing operating business in 1987. At the time there were six buildings and several tank farms present at the Site. Most of the Site was reportedly covered by concrete, asphalt or buildings. During its operational history, the plant manufactured oil-modified alkyd resins and polyester resins, and thermosetting and thermoplastic polymers for the paint, coating and graphic arts industries. The production process included the use of methyl butyl ketone, methyl ethyl ketone, isobutanol, mineral spirits, benzene, xylene, naphtha, toluene, and ethylbenzene. Tankers and rail cars were loaded at the plant as part of its operation. Several underground storage tanks containing gasoline, diesel fuel, and fuel oil were used at the Site. The facility ceased operations in June 1995, and was closed and demolished in 1997.

In 1996, Reichhold Chemicals submitted a General Information Notice in accordance with the Industrial Site Recovery Act (ISRA). A Field Sampling Plan was approved by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and executed by the company in 2000. A Remedial Investigation Report Addendum was submitted to the NJDEP in October 2006.

The Passaic River is located approximately 1,000 feet north of the Site. Runoff from the Site likely enters storm sewers that discharge to the Passaic River. There are no potable wells located within four miles of the Site. The depth to ground water is approximately four feet. It is expected that the shallow ground water flows towards the Passaic River. It is estimated that approximately 2,900 residents live within 0.5 miles of the Site, with the closest being within a couple of blocks to the southwest on Chapel Street.

#### Site assessment activities/observations

The Pre-Remedial site files, which included a Site Inspection Report (February 2005), as well as files pertaining to an emergency response action taken by EPA in 1992, were reviewed as part of this RSE. A site reconnaissance was conducted by the Removal Action Branch on January 17, 2007.

The Site is fenced except for an entrance on Cornelia Street. It appears as though the business operating at the Site uses it as a parking lot and that there is not any type of office on the property. The main office for this operation appears to be situated across the street from the Site to the south. An elevated aboveground storage tank is situated on the northeast corner of the Site within a concrete containment system. The Site is mostly paved or covered in crushed stone and is set at a slightly higher elevation than the area outside of the fence. There are some small grassed areas near the periphery of the Site.

#### Release or threatened release into the environment of a hazardous substance, or pollutant or contaminant

EPA responded to an explosion and fire that occurred at the Site on January 10, 1992. A tank containing butyl acrylate catalyzed with VAZO-64 was suspected to have been the cause of the incident. Firefighters responded and subdued the flames within two hours. The responsible party retained the services of a contractor to contain the runoff from the Site and address the cleanup on the Site. Visual observations during the fire indicated that a cloudy, epoxy-type substance was present in the runoff that was entering the Passaic River via the storm sewers.

Sampling conducted in 1992 as part of the closure activities associated with the underground storage tanks indicated the presence of xylene, ethylbenzene, and lead. In 1993, the NJDEP collected soil samples from a small strip of unpaved ground adjacent to the southern fence line and other perimeter locations due to the presence of leaking drums and spillage migrating onto the adjacent sidewalk. The presence of PCBs, arsenic, lead, and zinc were identified. Additional soil sampling conducted in 1997 as part of an ISRA investigation identified ethylbenzene, toluene, xylene, 2, 4-dimethylphenol, PCBs, and petroleum hydrocarbons in the soil and/or ground water. A ground water plume of fuel oil is present in the south-central portion of the Site.

### Threats to Public Health or Welfare

Although there is some potential for direct contact with CERCLA hazardous substances on a portion of the Site, it is not likely that the public would come into any significant contact with the contamination. The area in the immediate vicinity of the Site is mostly industrial and commercial. Pedestrians that use the streets around the Site are generally limited to mostly workers from the area. Aside from the fact that the gate to the property is open at times, the public does not generally have access to the Site since it is fenced and mostly paved and/or covered with stone. Workers appear to spend brief periods of time either parking or removing equipment from the Site.

A Fish Consumption Advisory is in place for the Newark Bay Complex and commercial fishing is banned. Recreational and subsistence fishing does occur downstream of the Site. Due to the industrial nature of the area surrounding the Site however, it is not likely that contamination from the Site, if it were to reach the Passaic River via ground water migration or through the storm sewers, could specifically be attributed to any potentially significant impact to fisheries.

### Threats to the Environment

At this time there is no documentation to indicate that the Site is currently having an acute impact to any sensitive environments or natural resources that may be associated with the Passaic River.

### Conclusions

Reichhold Chemicals is currently involved with the NJDEP in addressing the soil and ground water contamination remaining at the Site in accordance with ISRA. Based on the available information, the Site does not warrant a CERCLA removal action at this time.